



A BRIEF
MEMOIR
OF
DEBORAH P. SMEDLEY,
LATE OF WILLISTOWN, CHESTER COUNTY,
PENNSYLVANIA.



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It is not alone from the love we bear to the memory of her who has so lately been gathered to rest, that we desire to preserve a little memorial of her character in life, and faith in death, but in the hope that, through the blessing of Him, "who seeth the end from the beginning," it may be instrumental for the comfort and encouragement of her young friends, and tenderly appeal to them also, to "lay aside every weight," and more unreservedly "come taste and see that the Lord is good," and that "*blessed* is the man that *trusteth* in Him."

DEBORAH P. SMEDLEY, the only daughter of Bennett and Deborah Smedley, of Willistown, Chester County, Pennsylvania, was born the 21st of the Second month, 1840. Being deprived by death of her valuable mother when only nine days old, the care and oversight of her infant years, under the su-

perintendence of her father, devolved upon strangers. To these she endeared herself very closely, and their kindness toward her ever called forth feelings of gratitude.

Her dear grandmother deceased when she was nearly five years old, after which event she came under the care of an aunt, to whom and to those with whom she was connected, she was the source of much satisfaction. Her sweet, affectionate, and cheerful disposition, strewed her own path with enjoyment and cheered all around her.

As she grew in years, amiable qualities appeared to take deep root in her heart and to strengthen with her days, and being nurtured by humility and piety, she became a truly lovely character.

From infancy her constitution had been delicate, and a cold taken when about twelve years old left a pain in her left lung; and sometime after, another cold produced inflammation in it, by which she was confined many months, leaving that lung nearly inactive, her respiration short and afflictive, and her cough hard and trying; yet her cheerfulness cast a ray of sunshine through all her daily movements, which en-

abled her to pass along in apparent comfort for some years.

Early in the autumn of 1858, an inflammation set in on the right lung, which had long been feared, from its frequent pain and soreness. By skilful medical aid the inflammation was removed, yet the pain and soreness continued, with increased cough and difficulty of respiration. The latter part of winter she thought these better, but the damp weather of spring and summer were trying to her, and her cough increased again, though she was still able to move about among her friends in her sprightly, quiet way. Notwithstanding the sweet vivacity that threw such a charm around her, those who were with her most, felt that her attachment to the things of earth was loosening; and many evidences of her serious feelings in regard to the delicate state of her health, are to be found in her letters to her friends.

The flattering nature of her disease, and her unselfish interest in all around her, induced a hope that she might be spared for years. About two weeks before her death, being asked if she felt well enough to go to meeting, she answered, "I think I am, it is Preparative meeting, and I believe I will go." In

the afternoon she was much worse, and during the next few days, her cough increased to a distressing degree.

The alarming symptoms still increasing, she was asked if she knew she was considered to be very ill: she answered "yes," and remaining silent for some time, added, "I have very little attachment for the world, or the things of the world; for a long time they have felt a burden to me, and I have felt as if I had nothing to give up but my friends; and when I thought of leaving you all behind, it seemed so hard, I did not know how I could do it; but I have been enabled to give you all up, and resign myself entirely into His hands, and think I feel peace." Sometime after, being asked if she had anything resting on her mind, she said "no, not anything."

She was frequently very much prostrated by severe spells of coughing, so that it was thought she could not survive many minutes; yet after a little rest and refreshment, she would revive, be calm and quiet and sweetly retired in mind; her faith and confidence being humbly fixed in her Heavenly Father, saying "it is He that supports me." On being asked if she had any message for some who were named, she re-

plied, "it does not do for me to send messages, it is my place to be still."

Her sufferings still continued from great oppression and palpitation of the heart; and desiring to be released, she would intercede,—“Dearest Father, be pleased to come and take me home:” “Dear Saviour, come?” “Sweet Jesus, be with me now.” When reviving, she would frequently say, “not yet,” “my time has not yet come.” “How long?” and once exclaimed, “patience, patience, I am afraid my patience will not hold out to the end.” On being encouraged to believe she would have strength given her, she replied, “I do not *feel* impatient.”

Through all, the sweet and heavenly serenity of her countenance remained unchanged, and she manifested a tender consideration toward all around her.

On a friend asking if she should stay with her to-night, she replied, “yes, if it is not too much:” again remarking, “I have many dear friends, but I have given them all up, and am resigned to the Divine will.”

8th mo. 1st, 1859.—Throughout second-day her

sufferings were very great, and she would, at times exclaim, "Oh my sufferings," "is this death?"—"Do you think I am going?"—"my time is not yet:"—"Why am I kept here?" and interceded, "Dearest Father, be pleased to let *thy time* come quickly." "Sweet Jesus be with me through the valley of the shadow of death."—"Oh! be with me now." To a friend she said, "When I had that bad spell yesterday, I thought I was forsaken, but I prayed He might return, and I think He has," adding, "I have done nothing, it is all through Him." And to her brother, "Dear brother, art thou willing to give me up?"

She had been lifted into the chair, which seemed a rest; and on being placed again in bed, she asked for paper and pencil, as articulation was very difficult. As she took the pencil in her trembling hands, her face beamed with its wonted bright sweet smile, but she was too weak to write but a very little.

The next day she was again lifted into the chair; and several times was thought by all to be going, but again and again revived. To a cousin she said, "Thou sees the suffering I have to pass through; try *so to live* that we may meet in Heaven, where I trust I shall soon be."

To those who had witnessed her difficulty of utterance, and listened attentively to catch her broken words, it felt most remarkable, when her voice was raised clearly and melodiously in prayer ;—" Oh Father, hasten, if it be Thy holy will, and release me from this bed of suffering." " Sweet Jesus, be with me through the valley of the shadow of death, and come quickly : " and shortly after, " Dearest Father, be with thy servant now." " What a comfort to feel thy sustaining power ! Dearest Father, *be pleased* to shorten my afflictions." Thus renewedly confirming the language, " open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise."

Very soon after, in the same strain, she said, " Dear brother, my heart is full of love to thee ; I want thee to be one of the flock and fold of Christ. May His blessing rest upon thee, and may thou never wander from His fold."

After she had been placed in bed for the last time, she said, " I feel overcome ; " and on reviving was told " the Lord's time is the best time ; and that she would soon be united to her dear mother ; " a cousin adding, " and to my mother ; "—she queried, " will they know me ? " Soon after, looking up longingly, it was asked

if she wanted anything, when she replied, "I want to go home;" and after another sinking spell, repeated, "my time is not yet." Being assured the right time would soon come, she replied, "but not yet;" then lying silent a few moments, emphatically added, "*not my will, but Thine be done.*" She suffered much from thirst, and at one time after taking a drink, said very sweetly, "no thirst there."

As the closing scene drew near, she said, "I think I should like to be quiet;" and soon after, "I want you all to pray for me in this trying hour, I feel so poor;" then again, "dont hold me, help me through." A few minutes after, gently turning on one side, as if to sleep, without sigh or struggle, her purified spirit was released from its bonds, and we doubt not, through unspeakable mercy, found its everlasting rest.

She departed this life, the 2nd day of the Eighth month, 1859, in the 20th year of her age; and on the 5th inst., her remains were interred at Willistown, when a large number of young Friends and others were assembled. A solemn meeting was held on the occasion, in which several testimonies were delivered, in support of the power and efficacy of that Grace, which had preserved her through life, and

prepared her to meet death with joy and not with grief.

The following extracts from a Diary, and from some more recent letters, indicate the operations of Divine Grace on her mind, making one who seemed to others singularly innocent, feel herself the "chief of sinners;" and prove how abiding was her earnest desire to be prepared, with her lamp trimmed and burning for the summons;—"Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye forth to meet Him."

Fifth mo. 25th, 1854.—I have been confined to the house for about three months, but now I have got so that I ride out every day when it is clear and pleasant. I have had, since I have been sick, a kind aunt for a nurse, and a good doctor, who, I have no doubt, have been the means of saving my life this time. How thankful I should be to an Almighty care-taker, that He has spared my life to my friends thus long. That I may endeavor to live better, and to be a much better person than I have been, is my desire.

When we come to be laid upon a sick bed, is the time we feel what poor dependent creatures we are; and when we look back and see how we have spent the precious time we have had given to us for better uses, how *awful* it is to find how little we have done to prepare us for the kingdom of Heaven. Indeed it has at times seemed to me as if I had done nothing but sin in the sight of the Lord, and at other times it seemed as if I had inexpressible joy.

12th mo. 8th, 1855.—How often is the mind depressed, how often do we seem hemmed in on all sides, and no possible way to get rid of our many, *many* sins! At such times do we not look to God for help? Yea, “He is a present helper in the needful time.” Did He not say, “they that seek me early shall find me?” Oh! then how necessary it is for us to seek Him in the morning of our life; for he said, “suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven.” How precious it is to experience His love, to sit alone and think on Him. Oh! He is near us in such times! How unworthy I am of the least of His mercies, and what blessings He has bestowed upon me! “Praises, praises, be to His everlasting name, for ever and ever!”

12th mo. 9th, 1855.—It is the First-day of the week; a very wet disagreeable day, so much so I thought I had better not run the risk of going to meeting—so staid at home. I think we may have as good seasons at home as at meeting: it has often pleased my kind Heavenly Father to visit me in my chamber when alone, and make it a little Bethel. Oh, how precious such seasons are!

It is a solemn thing to go to meeting: to go for the sole purpose of worshipping God. If we do not do it, what mockery it is to go. But how hard we have to strive against the enemy of all good, to keep the mind fixed on the one right thing. Ah! how he tempts us little by little, until he would have us his. I do dislike to see lightness in a meeting for worship, though I know I am too liable to be foolish at such times, when I see others so.

12th mo. 16th, First-day morning.—I staid at home again to-day, on account of the rain. My spirits are not so dull as they were this day week. I am not nearly so lonely as I thought I should be. I believe if we are busy, we are never lonely. At least I find it so.

12th mo. 23rd.—It is a beautiful, mild, warm day

something unusual, for I think we have not had more than three or four clear first-days for the last two or three months. I went to meeting this morning, and was favored to keep my mind pretty quiet, and think of Heaven and Heavenly things, in a degree for which I thank my dear and merciful Father. Though the enemy of all good was watching his chances—Oh ! how he tempts me ! That I may be enabled to withstand his temptations is my fervent desire, and I know that none but the Lord can give me strength to withstand them.

12th mo. 30th.—I was at meeting this morning, but was poor in spirit, and as a sheep wanting a master ; as one that had wandered away and got lost in a vast wilderness.

Oh ! how am I to gain an entrance into that celestial city, where the angels of God are forever singing His praises,—where there is no darkness, but all is light ; where none can say I am sick, or in pain, but all is peace, comfort, happiness, glory and praise ? The city that God dwells in, the home of God, where He forever sits on His throne of glory, waiting for us to come unto Him.—How am I to enter into this city ? such a sinner as I, the most unworthy of all

sinners : I, who have done nothing but sin from day to day ? Surely such a one as I cannot enter into this city, in any other way than by the mercy of God. I must repent of all my former sins, which are many, *many* ; yea, I must “repent and live.” I must “put off the old man, and put on the new,” “walk no longer in darkness, but in the light ;” must be washed, cleansed and purified in the blood of the Lamb. Did He not say, “unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of Heaven ?” I pray that He who died for all sinners, will have mercy even on one so sinful as I.

Oh ! most Holy Father, be pleased to keep me in thy care. Let me not wander entirely away from thy flock ; show me where to go, and teach me how to do thy will and serve Thee. Teach me to pray to Thee, and enable me to bear thy cross—to withstand the temptations of the world ;—and be near me in secret places.

1st mo. 30 th, 1856.—Our precious Lord and Saviour died for our sins. He who chose to be called the Lamb, because He was meek and humble. Oh how he suffered for us ! He was nailed to the cross, and died, but was raised again the third day. The

hand of the Lord doeth miraculous wonders ; by Him, Heaven and earth, and all that is therein, were created. "The beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, and the fishes of the sea," were all made by Him for the use and comfort of man, and yet man is the only one that disobeys His commandments. It pleased the Lord to favor man by placing in him an immortal part, a soul—which, when he is done with this life, is taken into the Holy City—the City of the Lord.—That City wherein there is no darkness, no night, but all is light, for the *Light* dwelleth there. There are the angels of God forever singing his praise. All is peace, glory, happiness, praise and love.

Be *Thou* my light, my guide, my all,
While through this fleeting world I roam ;
And when this life with me is ended,
Oh ! take me to that blessed Home.

7th mo. 7th, 1857.—* * * This world is very beautiful : indeed it is such that one might, if he had not found it otherwise, suppose that where all seemed so fair, there could be no trials, nothing to prevent our happiness. But, alas ! not so. God has ordained that here we shall have trial and tribulation, in order

to wean us from the follies to which man is prone. We cannot forget that this is not our final resting place, but that there is a region above in Heaven, which is inhabited by the ransomed spirits of those who have left this world, and have become as the angels of God. And if we live in a manner becoming Christians, we shall also be the inmates of that glorious home. It seems strange to me that we should be aware that unless we live *to* God, we can never expect to live *with* Him, and still go on in the same wicked, sinful way. How is this? It is a mystery; but ah! how true. Sometimes I feel as if I did not deserve the love of any one; as though I was the most unworthy person that existed, and feel almost ready to wonder how my Heavenly Father permits me to live. How very kind, patient, and slow to anger He is!

To a bereaved friend she writes, First mo. 20th, 1858:

“I had a very pleasant visit with you last week, but how constantly was I reminded that death had been passing through,” and laid his icy hand on one, who only the last time I was there, mingled amongst us. You must all feel a great blank, but

“Let us be patient, these severe afflictions
Not from the ground arise,
And oftentimes celestial benedictions
Assume this dark disguise.”

“Oh, my dear, I do hope these warnings are not sent in vain, but that we may all strive more diligently to live a godly life, that when the pale messenger comes, we may without fear be enabled to leave this world and all belonging thereto, to inhabit a better and more glorious home, where those *dear ones* who have gone before, will again be restored to us, never more to be separated. Oh how joyful the prospect of such ! but how often do we apparently forget that this is not our resting place. How very many temptations there are, and how necessary that we should keep constantly on the watch, lest we wander away from well doing. I feel, dear friend, as though no one was off their guard more than thy poor unworthy friend.

“Yes, dear, the day of ——’s funeral was one which I think will long be remembered, and I trust I then received impressions which will not soon wear away. Can I forget that evening after I came home, when silently I stole to my chamber, away from all outward things that should disturb my meditations, and

there gave vent to my feelings which I could no longer control, and raised my feeble prayers to One who knows our every thought.—* * * * Are not such seasons sweet? How little worth seem all the things of this world then!"

3rd mo. 14th, 1858.—* * * "Most true it is, that we are poor frail creatures, who of ourselves can do nothing. And oftentimes when the spirit is willing the flesh is so weak, as to have rule over the better part. This is too often the case when we are in company with our young friends. I know *I* am particularly subject to conversing on unprofitable subjects, when with the gay and lively, and as my dear mother used to say when she was young, "I very seldom go away from home with my young friends, without returning poorer than I went." I always say or do something I should not. Oh! how often when I am alone, do I wish I could when in company bridle my tongue better; but then when all around are in glee and enjoying themselves with such converse, which though not actually sinful, does not tend to improve the mind or heart, how strong the temptation is to join in with them, and how often do we, almost without knowing it, find ourselves doing just what we would not. At least this is the case with my sinful self.

“ At times my sufferings are severe, but my dear, I consider these bodily afflictions are one of the richest blessings my Heavenly Father has bestowed upon me. He knows what is best for his poor frail children. Each new pain seems a gentle messenger, sent to remind me that this is not my resting place, and to wean me from the perishing things of this sinful world. I hope and trust they are not sent to me in vain. Oftentimes when I have been well for a long time, and become too negligent as to the source from whence my many blessings flow, He in His tender mercy, for my own good, sees mete gently to smite me with His chastening rod, and draw me by His loving-kindness nearer to Him. How can I ever sufficiently thank Him for His care over me !”

* * * “How strikingly true are the lines :

“Enough has Heaven ordained of joys below
To tempt our tarriance in this loved retreat;
Enough has Heaven ordained of *useful woe*
To make us languish for a happier seat.”

“ Since we know not the day or the hour wherein the pale Messenger may come to our door, to bear us to our final resting place, how awfully important it is

that we should be found *prepared* to leave all and render an account of our stewardship."

"I feel very unworthy of the many kind and sympathising friends I have, and can but wonder why they should regard me with feelings of love. May I feel more and more thankful for the manifold blessings bestowed on a creature so unworthy as I!"

A short time previous to the death of a beloved aunt, and but a few weeks prior to Deborah's second severe attack of illness, she thus writes to a friend, under date;

Eighth mo. 24th 1858.

"I cannot account for my feelings, but for three or four days past I have felt as if something unusual—something *awful* was awaiting us. These feelings have rested with such weight upon me, that I have not been able to disperse them, even for a few minutes at a time; they have caused me much serious reflection. It may be our Heavenly Father is about to visit us with sickness, or *even death*; but who of us can tell? none! It is unknown to any but Him who alone can give or take from us life or health. But his Holy will be done; and may all be resigned, knowing "He afflicteth not willingly."

“God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform.”

“Perhaps it is the means he has chosen, to draw my poor sinful heart more away from the perishing things of earth, to those of surer foundation. May his end be accomplished !”

10th mo. 24th, 1858.—“This sickness has been a trying, proving one to me, but if I only learn a lesson of patience and entire resignation to the Divine will, it will be a rich reward for all my sufferings. At one time when dwelling too much upon my present feelings, I could but think, ‘If I am to have these spells of sickness till my lungs both become solid or waste away, why can I not go now?’ But there is One who knows what is best for His children. Ah ! *He knew* that I was *entirely unprepared*. He has spared me again. What for ?”

11th mo. 4th.—“It will be six weeks to-morrow since I was taken sick, though I can hardly think it has been so long. Dear ——, during my sickness I thought, *if* I were only prepared, my spirit cleansed from its *filthiness*, how joyful it would be to leave this world, to inhabit that glorious home above, and join the happy choir of angels, who are forever singing Holy

praises to our Father. Earth seemed to have but one tie—my friends! The thought of parting with them seemed painful—but oh, I should willingly part with them for a home in Heaven, trusting they too would sometime know its *continual* pleasures. Sometimes, my dear friend, I feel tired of this world, its pleasures are very short lived—they soon vanish. Though the sick chamber to many, may seem a gloomy place, I think it is not always so, for I have known sweet seasons within its walls, such as are not found amongst the busy bustle of the gay. The following beautiful and strikingly true lines, seem very fresh to my memory :—

“Chamber of sickness! midst thy silence oft
A voice is heard,
Which tho’ it falls like dew on flowers, so soft,
Yet speaks each word
Into the aching heart’s unseen recess,
With power no earthly accents could possess.”

11th mo. 29th.—“My heart often aches so under its own burden of sin, that I think any *mortal* aid would be ineffectual. I hope I am learning to seek aid from above, and make One who alone can comfort the sick soul, my Holy Comforter.”

12th mo. 10th.—“I have had much serious feeling of late, owing perhaps to my state of health. I try

to appear well and comfortable when with my friends, and often think their presence is beneficial ; but I am no sooner left alone to dwell upon my feelings, than I become sad, and often quite discouraged. I feel a great weakness and soreness at times, accompanied with sharp pain in both lungs ; these forcibly remind me, how uncertain is life ; and at times, I am ready to think my life is gradually wearing away. * * * * * What a great work there is yet for me to do, and how few days I may have to accomplish it in ! I know there is not a moment to spare, and yet how hard it is to *begin* to live rightly. I am so weak. The spirit seems willing, but the flesh is weak."

As spring advanced there seemed a temporary hope that this tenderly beloved one might yet be spared for years of this life. While cheerfully carrying out the wishes of her friends in every means to promote her health, she seemed touchingly submissive to the hidden but unerring Will concerning her.

Under date of 4th mo. 28, 1859, she writes : "To-day was our Monthly meeting. It was very small and silent, with the exception of a short sermon from D. C. which seemed so well suited to my own sinful state, that I cannot doubt but it was rightly authorized.

After meeting we went to ———, and as we sat there this afternoon, I was led to compare the then present company with the Monthly meeting friends who used to gather there years ago. The number was small, and some that met with us then, are now gone to be seen of men no more; and I thought that some who are still there, must according to nature's decay, soon leave their earthly habitation. We all must sooner or later, but *when*, none can tell; nor does it matter, if we are prepared to enter into those mansions of perfect bliss, which our Father has in store for those who have loved and served Him."

"Dear L—— S—— ! I love to think of her as one of those bright and happy spirits that inhabit the home of the ransomed. Although I was not at all acquainted with her, I felt an unusual degree of love and admiration for her. I know not why, unless it is the probability of my having at some time the same disease—consumption, that I always feel so much sympathy and interest for any one afflicted with it. I cannot describe my feelings with regard to it, they have been so ever since I was very young. Indeed, I cannot refrain from shedding tears of sympathy for any one, friend or stranger, on whom I trace any marks of the disease. I do not dread it like most do,

for I think, as a general thing, it is more calculated to soften, tender and prepare the heart for the future life, than almost any other. It is so gradual, and life seems to wear away so regularly, reminding its victims that the time is approaching, when disease shall no more smite them."

5th mo. 27th.—"Is not this weather charming enough to make one in love with this life and this world? If it is so beautiful here, how glorious, how magnificent must be that home above, where we trust our happy angelic mothers are now dwelling, free from all earthly care and sorrow! That those little helpless ones they left motherless on this earth, may again meet them in the land where parting is no more, is my most fervent wish for us. Go to dwell with Him whom we always call Father! What an enrapturing prospect!"

Or as she elsewhere expresses it:

"Forever and together shall we bow before God's throne,
Dwelling in Love, and Love in us, living by Love alone."



The following selections from many similar articles left among her papers, are added, as being characteristic of her happy feeling spirit, while with us.

TWILIGHT MUSINGS.

Once more the shadows of evening are gathering around me, as I sit here at the western window, gazing upon the golden archway, beneath which the sun has just passed from view. How delightfully calm and pleasing is the aspect which Nature now presents! Nought is heard save the farewell notes of many warblers, before they seek repose "in their airy couches high,"—mingled with the happy song and laughter of the young. The weary laborer at last has ceased to labor, and again joined the social circle to enjoy the peaceful twilight.

And has not the hour a peculiar influence on the mind? Who of us has not felt it? It seems to be a time for meditation, not only on the past, but also on "the dim, dark, mysterious future" which no mortal eye can scan. Now it is that memory fondly lingers with days that have gone forever, and recalls the many pleasures we have experienced. But how few of us there are, who have *nought* but *pleasure* to recall! On the contrary, some of us may seem, whilst reviewing the past, to have witnessed but *few* bright spots, as lights to cheer us on the rough and boisterous tide of life. But let such remember,

“Our joys would not seem near so bright
Did not some *shadows* in their flight,
Steal o’er our destined way ;
And were our sky forever bright
We would not value it aright
And prize each feeble ray.”

Who is there that has not had some disappointment, some trial,—or perhaps some *grief*, that time will not efface ? But even to such as these, twilight is an hour of tender thought ; and though to them life may indeed have been a “cheequered scene,” still at this time, there *must* spring up *some* happy recollection of the past. It may be the remembrance of the gentle voice or loving look of some beloved friend who is absent,—(perhaps of one who is laid in the cold dark grave) that awakens the train of tender thought, for—

“Awake but one, and lo ! what myriads rise,
Each treads its image as tho other flies.”

Though it has been my lot to have both pleasant and sorrowful recollections at the twilight, still I hold that season as the most sacred hour of the day, and I feel, that

Then’s when memory lingers longest
Round the warm and feeling heart ;

Then's when former joys and sorrows
Come again before me clear,
And when memory fondly borrows
From the tendered heart—a tear.

Then the friends my heart hath cherished
Seem to hold their places near,
And their kind words have not perished,
For their echo still I hear.

And the forms of dear departed,
Those who've left this world of pain,
Who are pure and heavenly hearted
Seem to visit me again.

As their spirits round me linger—
Thus methinks they seem to say,
(While to Heaven points the finger)
“Come with us to endless day.

“Come and drink of Heaven's pure fountain,
Gushing forth from springs of love;
Soar with us the aerial mountain,
To our joyful home above.

“Come and put on spotless garments,
Leave these tainted ones behind,
Oh! leave earth and its endearments,
Flee to Heaven,—its joys are thine!”

And the wish that I am thinking
As I hear their wings arise,
Is that I my chain were linking
With the home beyond the skies;

And as I leave the spot where I have spent the twilight hour in meditation, I can but exclaim—

Let me not forget the feelings
That have filled my heart to-night;
For they seem'd like faint revealings
From some inward source of light.

LIFE HATH CHANGES.

First I thought that life was sweet,
And found pleasures everywhere;
Smooth its paths were to my feet,
Filled with music was the air:

Earth seemed like a brilliant flower,
Painted in a fadeless hue—
Whose petals opening every hour
Brought nectar to my view.

When I heard the aged pilgrim,
Saying life was full of care;
Was it strange that I should wonder,
Thinking life so very fair?

Little did I heed their saying,
When they said my joys would fade ;
And that soon my childish playing
Into labor *would* be made.

Many years to me are numbered,
Since I dreamed *that* dream of life ;
Many hours since then I've slumbered,
Dreaming earth was full of strife.

Ah! my first fair vision faded,
Quickly as the morning dew,
But my last one, though so shaded,
Is, alas! indeed too true.

I have learned that life hath changes
For the youthful dreamer gay,
That the castles he now ranges
Soon to nought will fade away.

I have learned that life hath sorrows,
For each frail and feeble heart ;
I have learned that its to-morrows
Are its most uncertain part.

I have seen a home of gladness
Into mourning quickly thrown,
Each face wore a look of sadness,
Each heart heaved a bitter groan.

In the train of mourners weeping,
Round the bed of death I've been,
Gazing on the dear one sleeping,
Free from all earth's care and sin.

As I watched that sainted mother,
Whose pure soul had winged its flight,
My thoughts wandered to another
Long since gone to realms of light.

Then I thought that life was bitter,
And that Death to them was sweet,
And I longed that I were fitter
In that home with them to meet.

* * * * *

But this life is not all dreary—
There is ever something bright,
There is ever something cheering,
Sent to give each pilgrim light.

All around me in my pathway,
God's rich blessings daily fall;
Lighting it with many a bright ray,
Casting sunshine over all.

Every bird and leaf and flower,
Sings a cheerful song of glee,
Every quickly fleeting hour
Has some pleasure still for me.

Friends that love me, God hath given,
Friends I've tried and proven long,
For this perfect gift of Heaven
Will I raise a grateful song.

So my life is not all sadness,
Tho' it may have known a change,
For I have my share of gladness
Intermingled with my pains.

I would ask that I might never
Murmur at the chastening rod,
But in love that I may ever
Bow me to the yoke of God.

Come then, joy or tribulation,
Let Him call my friends away ;
I will offer this oblation,
A heart to praise Him and obey.

1858.

A MEMOIR OF DEBORAH P. SMEDLEY

Philadelphia, 1860

Bound in full maroon leather with bright orange endsheets.

When received the leather was rotten, both boards detached, and the sewing broken.

Treatment: The book was disbound. The signatures were reinforced at the folds with Sekishu Kozagami Turu, endsheets of Rives Lightweight added, and the book resewn. A 50/50 mixture of Jade 403 and methylcellulose was used against the textblock. The book was cased in full maroon Canson Ingres paper. The title was stamped in gold directly onto the front board.

Ellen Anne Owings

1985

